

South Dakota Character Education



SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

March, 2004

“It is better to
deserve honors
and not get
them than to
have them and
not deserve
them.”

Mark Twain

WEB SITE:

A lot of us want to help our neighbors or children near to us or in far away lands. This web-site tells you what's needed and where— and the short-term, measurable initiatives that can make a difference in the lives of struggling families. The site, <http://www.do-gooder.org>, focuses on projects such as sending books to a library that has been flooded, the need for collecting 600 pairs of mittens for orphans in Kazakhstan, and delivering art supplies to children in Bolivia.



Helping Kids-and Adults-Take Responsibility for Their own Character

(excerpts from an article by Rom Lickona, Director of the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs

If we want to nurture young people in character, we must also see ourselves as engaged in the same humble process of trying to become a better person. New research on adult development indicates that adults' character qualities are not static. Some adults become wiser, more patient, more giving over time; others become more selfish. The challenge for all of us, at every stage of life, is to stay on the moral journey, keeping in mind the words of Eleanor Roosevelt: “Character-building begins in infancy and continues until death.”

Here are three ways we can challenge students—and ourselves—to strengthen our character.

Keep a Character Record Book:
Goal setting and self-assessment are a necessary part of self-improvement. At a school in Massachusetts every student keeps such a book. At the end of the day, they write responses to three questions regarding that week's virtue. If the virtue of the week was courtesy, the questions would be:

How have I shown courtesy today?

How have I not shown courtesy today?

How will I show courtesy tomorrow?

Make a Goal Strip:

“Goal strips” can help us set specific goals we want to accomplish within a specific time period.

Cut a 3"x12" colored paper strip for each goal. Fold the strip into three equal sections. On the first section print “I will.”. In the middle section print what you will do, and in the final section print when you will do it. Now the goal is set, e.g. “I will clean my room in 45 minutes.”

Do a Goal-Setting Bulletin Board:

A San Diego teacher gave this assignment, “Find newspaper or magazine articles about individuals who set and pursued a goal. Students briefly share their articles and then post them on the board. The teacher says, “This activity convinces students that goal-setting helps people succeed in life.”

Laws of Life Essay Contest

South Dakota students have had an opportunity to write about meaningful values in their lives and, as a result, to donate generously to charities of their choice. The *Laws of Life* essay contest is a nationwide contest encouraging students to spend some time thinking, and then writing about values, people, and/or events that have meant a lot in their lives and will continue to influence them. Students who wrote essays earning first place in their communities were considered at the state level.

This is the first year

of the contest in South Dakota and these are the winners at the state level and their charity choices:

1st place – Diana L. Gyllings – Brookings School District - \$1000 to Heifer International

2nd place – Alicia Jungers – Watertown School District - \$500 to Make-a-Wish Foundation

3rd place – Shane Stumvoll – Spearfish School District - \$300 to United Way

4th place (tie) – Tiffany Davis – Marion School District - \$100 to The Banquet in Sioux Falls

4th place (tie) – Rachel N. Knutson – Pierre Public School - \$100 to the Multiple Sclerosis Society

6th place – Melanie Jane Smith – Meade School District - \$100 to the Black Hills Humane Society

CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE SCHEDULED July 8,9, 2004

Ramkota Convention Center,
Pierre, SD

College credit offered

Keynote speakers:

Hal Urban and

Deb Austin Brown

Breakouts by representatives of districts who have good news to share about their character education efforts, and other presentations with emphasis on character education.

Information now available on
Character Education Web Site:
<http://www.state.sd.us/deca/CSCF/CEP/conference.htm>

SEE YOU THERE!

SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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WE ARE ON THE WEB:

www.state.sd.us/deca/CSCF/CEP/

- Current newsletter
- Resources and other links
- Student opportunities
- Professional development

THE SD PARTNERSHIPS:

The South Dakota Character Education Partnership grant was received during the summer of 2001. The goals for the grant are:

- To establish high quality character education implementation sites that embrace the virtues that are embodied in SD Code, as well as other character traits identified by the local community, in a manner which effectively models the principles of good character through the actions of school staff and students.
- To develop the lifelong skills and ethical behaviors necessary to be contributing citizens in a democratic society by integrating character education practices within the total school and community.
- To effectively link existing local, state and federal resources that merge effective school research and character development in a caring community.
- To maintain or improve student academic achievement while expanding student understanding of, commitment to, and action upon core ethical values.

Contact people for the 10 partnership districts:

Brookings: Kathy Miller – Kathy.Miller@k12.sd.us

Flandreau: Dawn Olson – olsond@flandreau.k12.sd.us

Pierre: Mary Jane Nelson – Maryjane.Nelson@k12.sd.us

Marion: Kerri Cox – kerri.cox@k12.sd.us

Meade: Vonnie Ackerman – vonackerman@rushmore.com

Mobridge: Brian Liedtke – liedkeb@mobridge.k12.sd.us

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Karen Bowen-Raymond – kbr@shannon.ws

Spearfish: Kathy Hood – khoo.adminpo@spearfish.k12.sd.us

Watertown: Lori Redlinger – lredlinger@wtm.k12.sd.us

West Central: Rhonda Fredrick – Rhonda.Frederick@k12.sd.us

Ideas that work:

1. There is a new book published by Free Spirit Publishing named *You Be the Judge*. A juvenile court judge features 21 of the cases he has had to make decisions about over the years. Judge Jacobs had a goal of getting other young people to consider their future actions. He provides the cases for their consideration. (www.freespirit.com)

2. You and Your Hero:

- Make two silhouettes out of white paper—one of your-

- self and one of your hero.
- Find some old magazines or newspapers. Cut out at least 10 words that describe important positive character traits of your hero. Glue them on his/her silhouette
- Then have a friend write at least 10 positive adjectives on your silhouette. How are you like/different from your hero? What did you learn about yourself?

(from *50 American Heroes* by Dennis Denenberg)

“School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students. But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.”

Carnegie Council Task Force.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY:

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is inviting proposals from public middle and high schools serving large numbers of low-income students and underrepresented minorities to apply for a \$3000 mini-grant to implement a school-developed initiative aimed at strengthening ties between the grant recipients' schools and their students' neighborhoods and communities.

More information can be found on their website:

http://www.principals.org/awards/bridgebuilders_grant.cfm

